

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated March 22, 2006, Claims 1 – 9 and 16 – 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,343,313 (Salesky). In response, the Applicant provides the following remarks.

As illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2 of the present application, the present invention may join two separate conference rooms, each having “input electronic equipment” and “output electronic equipment.” As stated on page 24, the output equipment includes devices such as a projector 15, a GUI display device 16, a whiteboard 17a, and a printer device 18. The input equipment includes devices such as a 3D image input device 17 and a scanner device 17. These devices are under the control of the equipment management unit, which may be implemented as part of the conference room server 11.

As further illustrated in Figs. 5, 22, 23, 25 et al. and the descriptions thereof, the present invention provides visual icons corresponding to the available electronic equipment in each conference room. For example, in Fig. 5, icons corresponding to the whiteboard 17a, the 3D image input device 17 and the scanner device 19 are displayed as input equipment 64, and icons corresponding to the project device 15, the data display device 16 and the printer device 18 are displayed as output equipment 65. The teleconferencing system, the conference server 11 and the client PC, all present in the first conference room 10, are also displayed as icons. In addition, other equipment such as the portable projector 32 and the printer device 18, present in the second conference room 30, are displayed as icons (discussed in the present application, page 33, lines 4 – 12).

Thus, the present invention provides a system in which participants can quickly visually determine what equipment is available on the system for use with the teleconference. Each pending independent claim includes at least the following claim element: “a display unit for displaying, as icons, the other attendant electronic equipment with their attendance authenticated by the authentication unit and the electronic equipment managed by the equipment management unit.” This claim element specifically states that the display unit displays, as icons, the “equipment managed by the equipment management unit.” As discussed above, the equipment managed by the equipment management unit includes the input and output equipment.

In contrast, Salesky does not teach or suggest showing the available equipment as icons on a display unit. The Office Action cites Col. 1, lines 59 – 62 of Salesky as supporting the rejection of this claim element. However, as quoted, the section merely states that “a pointer icon for each conferee can be displayed on the screen, and the conferee is able to modify the location of his or her pointer, even if the conferee is not one who can modify the shared display itself.” Clearly, displaying a pointer that each participant may use to point to different locations on the screen is not the same as an icon showing each piece of equipment available on the system.

Salesky does mention at Col. 14, line 60 – Col. 15, line 14 that each participant may be represented by an icon. However, this discussion does not mention or suggest that any input or output equipment is shown as icons. Nor do any of the figures illustrated that each participant can see what equipment is available in an icon list on each screen. Thus, it is believe that the present claims are allowable over the prior art of record for at least this reason.

It is now believed that the present claims are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the processing of this application, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number.


The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees (or credit any overpayment) associated with this communication and which may be required under 37 CFR §1.78 to Deposit Account No. 50-2603, referencing Attorney Docket No. 352739.00300. A duplicate sheet is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, US Patent & Trademark Office, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on July 24, 2006.

Dated: July 24, 2006

Signed: 
Maryalice Kelley